

42
THE
SPEECH
OF

W^{il}. Howard;

LATE

Lord Viscount Stafford:

Upon the Scaffold on *Tower hill*,

Immediately before his Execution:

On Wednesday December. 29.

1680.

Together with His

PRAYERS

In *Latine* and *Englisb* on the Scaffold,

Delivered there with His own Hand, in Writing, to

Sheriff Bethel:

As also his Behaviour Before and After His Speech.

Printed for *J. Clarke*, at the Bible and Harp in *West-smithfield*.

The Lord Viscount Stafford's Execution, on Wednesday the 29th. of Decemb. on Tower-hill, with his last Speech on the Scaffold.

THe miraculous discoveries of the great horrid and damnable Plot is never to be forgotten by any whose hearts are furnisht with such a sufficiency of loyalty, as to detest even the thoughts of a Traytor ; and now let me acquaint you with the most remarkable passages and Dying Words of William late Lord Viscount Stafford, who on Wednesday the 29th. of Decemb. 1680. about 10 of the Clock was conducted to the Scaffold, which with a dismay'd countenance he beheld, and after being mounted, he prepared himself for the fatal blow, by stripping off his upper Garments, and disposing of them at his own pleasure ; which being done, he drew a sheet of paper out of his pocket, which was filled with what he before had deliberately considered how to compose, and with a shaking Hand, an aking Heart, and a very low Voice, he read ; but the particulars of the Contents, I must deferr till the next : And then walking to several corners of the Scaffold to behold the numerous spectators, he deliver'd himself in this manner following.

BY the permission of Almighty God, I am this day brought hither to suffer Death, but I hope God of his infinite mercy will pardon my defects, and accept of my good Intentions.

Since my long Imprisonment, I have often considered what might be the original cause of my being thus accused, since I knew my self not culpable, so much as in a thought, and I cannot believe it to be of any other account, than my being of the Church of Rome ; I have no reason to be ashamed of my Religion, for it teacheth nothing but the right Worship of God, Obedience to the King, and due subordination to the Temporal Laws of the Nation ; and I do submit to all the Articles of Faith believed and taught in the Catholick Church, believing them to be most consonant to the Word of God : And whereas it hath been often objected, that the Church holds that Sovereign Princes Excommunicated by the Pope, may by their Subjects be deposed or murdered : As to the murder of Princes, I have been often Taught as a matter of Faith in the Catholick Faith, that such Doctrine is Diabolical, Horrid, and Detestable, and contrary to the Law of God, Nature, and Nations ; and as such, from my heart I renounce and abominate

abominate it. As for the Doctrine of Deposing of Princes, I know some Divines of the Catholick Church hold it, but as Able and Learned as they have written against it: but it was not pretended to be the Doctrine of the Church, that is, any point of Catholick Faith: wherefore I do here in my Conscience declare, that it is my true and real Judgement, That the same Doctrine of deposing Kings, is contrary to the Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, injurious to Sovereign power, and consequently would be in me or any other of his Majesties Subjects, impious and damnable. I believe and profess, That there is One God, One Saviour, One Holy Catholick Church, of which through the Mercy, Grace, and goodness of God, I dye a Member.

To my great and unspeakable grief, I have offended God in many things, by many great Offences, but I give him most humble thanks, not in any of those Crimes of which I am accused.

After which, with an unwilling willingness to draw toward a period, he Applied himself to prayer, and kneeling down upon the Scaffold he made two prayers, one in Latin and the other in *English*, as followeth.

O Lord Jesu,

I Acknowledge my sins to be many and great, for which I fear, but I hope in thy mercy and thy compassion: not according to the number of them, but according to thy mercy thou wilt have pity on me: and according to the multitude of my sins, that thou wilt take away mine iniquity: for if my sins are many, thy mercy is more; if great, infinite is thy mercy: if I have offended, so that thou mayest condemn me, thou hast not lost that power by which thou art only able and wont to save: if thou wilt cleanse me, I shall be
A 2 clean,

(4)

clean. I believe as he hath believ'd, and hope as he hath hoped, and bewail as he hath bewailed, say therefore to my soul, that thou art my health, make me whole, and I shall be whole, save me, and I shall be saved, and I will sing thy mercies for ever: do not put me from thy Face, neither withdraw thy holy Spirit from me, but make me glad, and confirm it within me. O sweet Jesu, thou hast said that thou wilt turn unto me, and I shall be turned, and from my whole heart, and soul, and mind, I turn unto thee, therefore return thy mercies unto me who am the unworthiest of all thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood: and thou hast said, that he that confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy: I confess (living) the Holy Catholick Religion; dying, I confess thou art my help, though I am unworthy to undertake to confess before our Father which art in Heaven. In thy promises, not in my own righteousness I trust; the Life which thou hast given me, I do willingly resign according to thy Divine will: into thy hands I commend my spirit, as into the hands of a merciful Father; in peace therefore I lie down, because thou hast appointed it, Amen, Lord Jesu, Amen.

About the hour of ten in the Mourning both the Sheriffs appeared, the Warrant being for Execution between Nine and Eleven, upon Tower-Hill, where was a numerous company of People both Horse and and Foot, with strong Guards; then appeared the
under

Under Sheriff of *Middlesex*, with a considerable Guard, all on Horse-back : then the Executioner came upon the Scaffold, and the Ax was brought and laid by the Block, which was covered with Black Cloth taken out of a Bag. About ten of the Clock the Lieutenant of the Tower appeared with his Guards and the Prisoner, and delivered him up to the Sheriffs, between the *Bulwark* and the Barrs, by whom and their Guards, he was conducted up to the Scaffold, so a Lane was made for the Sheriffs on the Right hand and on the Left. Upon his ascending the Scaffold, the black cloth was spread, where-upon the Block was laid; his Coffin Was brought before him, being Hinged, but not covered with Black, being an *Elm* Coffin with these two Letters, *W. S. 1680.* The Prisoner at the foot of the Scaffold appeared extreamly unconcerned, and rather like a spectator : by the press of the people, the difficulty was great in his getting upon the scaffold.

At last the Sheriffs conducted him up before them, there being a great shout upon his ascending the scaffold : being ascended, he saluted several Gentlemen on the scaffold, and was saluted by them again, and addressed himself with his face towards the street, and put off his Hat, having a Written Paper in his hand, being his speech. He had upon
his

his little left finger, two Rings, one of them with a blew stone, having on a light-colour'd Perriwigg, and a loose Camlet Coat: he kneeled down before the Block and read his prayer in *Latin*, sometimes with his Eyes lifted up, making a stop, pulled his Handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped his eyes, and pray'd as followeth.

Agnosco (*Domine Fesu*) peccata mea multa & magna pro quibus timeo, sed spero in misericordia & miserationibus tuis, ~~quam~~ non est numerus: Secundum igitur magnam misericordiam tuam miserate mei, & secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Si peccata mea multa sunt, major est misericordia tua, si multa, infinita sunt miserationes tuae, si ego commisi unde me posses condemnare, tu non amisisti unde potes & soles Salvare: Credenti in potentia tua, & dicenti, Domine si vis potes me mundare tu statim respondisti, volo Mundare, Credo quod ipse credidit, spero quod ipse, peravit, imploro quod ipse imploravit. Dic igitur anime mea salus tua ego sum, sana me Domine Fesu & sanabor, saluum me fac & saluus ero, & misericordias tuas in aeternum Cantabo. Ne Projicau me igitur a facie tua, & spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me, sed redde mihi Letitiam salutaris tui, & spiritu principali confirma me. Tu Dixisti Dulcissime Fesu, Convertimini ad me & ego convertar ad vos, ego me ex toto corde meo, tota anima mea, ex tota mente mea, converto ad te; converte te igitur miserecordissime ad me, indignum famulum tuum, quem pretioso sanguine redemisti. Tu dixisti qui me confessus fuerit coram hominibus confitebor & ego eum coram Patre meo qui in Caelis est ego te, & sanctum Religionem Catholicam vivens confiteor & moriens adjuvante gratia tua confitebor, dignare me igitur suscipere, & confiteri

fiteri coram Patre tuo qui in Caelis est. In tua promissione non in mea iustitia confido: Vitam quam dedisti mihi Libenter tibi reddo secundam beneplacitum tuum, in manus tuas commendo Spiritum meum, qui moriens spirituum tuum in manus aeterni Patris commendaſti. In Pace igitur in idipſum dormiam & requieſcam, quoniam tu Domine ſingulariter in ſpe conſtituiſti me, Amen, Feſu, Amen.

His Prayer being ended, he delivered his Paper to the Sheriff Bethel, and ſaid, Mr. Sheriff, this is my laſt Prayer. After which his Coat was pulled off, and had next his Shirt a White Flower'd Silk Waſtcoat, and on his head a Sky-colour'd Silk-quilted Cap, turned up with a pritty broad white Bone-Lace, one of his Servants Clipping off with a pair of Sizzars, ſome of his Shirt and waſt-coat about his Neck. In his Deportment he ſeemed very little concern'd; then he kneeled down and fitted his Neck to the Block again the ſecond and third time, the queſtion being asked, whether he would give a Sign for the Blow, he roſe up again and ſpake to this purpoſe; He would give no Sign, they might take their own time, and Gods Will be done. He lay very ſtill on the Block, upon which the Executioner took up the Ax and felt about the Edge of it, then looking upon the Priſoner he ſhook his Head, and ſo he aimed two or three times, and then gave the ſtroke; which being done, neither
Head

Head nor Body moved a jot ; after which, some of the flesh of his Throat not being cut through, he took his Knife out of his Pocket and cut it a-sunder : the Head was receiv'd into a black Scarf, which the Heads-man took up Cap and all, and held it up round the Scaffold, saying these words ; *Here is the Head of a Traytor, here is the Head of a Traytor against the King.* After which the Body lay about the space of half a quarter of an hour, or more, upon the Black Cloth: the Blood being pritty well drained, it was Coffin'd up, Wast-coat and all with him, and his Head wrapt up in the Black Scarf and put into the Goffin ; his Head and Body being from thence Decently Conveyed by the Common-Bearers , his own Servants bearing up the *Velvet Pall*, and *Scarfsnet sheet*, and was Interred in the Chappel belonging to the *Tower*.

FINIS.

